



D-Backs are glowing, but can they keep growing?

BICKLEY, 1C, SPORTS

ARIZONA REPUBLIC

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There are about **22,000 probate cases** in Maricopa County, and that number has steadily increased by between 6 and 7 percent annually over the past few years, according to court officials.



Bob McGuire visits his wife, Linda, in her room at an adult-care home in Goodyear. McGuire is fighting the legal costs he's had to pay as he tries to tap his wife's IRA to help pay for medical expenses after she was diagnosed with dementia. TOM TINGLE/THE REPUBLIC

A YEAR IN COURT

Surprise couple's probate odyssey shows importance of proper estate planning

Craig Harris Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

All Bob McGuire wanted was to cash out his wife's modest retirement account and use the money to pay the mounting bills that have accompanied her dementia diagnosis.

After nearly a year, the 75-year-old Surprise resident and Navy veteran has racked up \$6,000 in legal bills and court fees to access the \$25,000 individual retirement account.

And his ordeal — navigating probate in Maricopa County Superior Court to obtain guardianship and conservatorship of his wife, Linda — isn't over: McGuire is contesting roughly another \$2,000 in legal fees from a court-appointed attorney, designated by a court commissioner to represent and protect the interests of his wife.

When it's all settled, the family could end up losing one-fourth of his wife's IRA to legal fees and bills, McGuire said.

Probate court is designed to preserve the

"respect and dignity of vulnerable adults and to assure their proper care and protection of assets," said Bryan Bouchard, a court spokesman.

Court officials would not comment on McGuire's case.

But Bouchard said Maricopa County's court system does everything possible to keep fees to a minimum. And in cases where one party questions the fees being charged by a court-appointed lawyer, the court will hold a hearing to determine whether the fees are "appropriate to the task and cost-effective," he said.

McGuire is currently appealing the court fees he has been charged.

Rick Kilfoy, who was appointed to represent Linda McGuire and check on her well-being, said a person who is incapacitated must have legal representation and the same lawyer who represented Bob McGuire could not represent his wife. Kilfoy declined to dis-

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Online: What is probate court, and how can you avoid it? Watch a video at [azcentral.com](#).

High cost, few tasks for FEMA rescuers

\$92M tab from storms includes Phoenix team

Jason Pohl Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Phoenix Fire Department's 80-person team of highly skilled rescuers crisscrossed the country last summer in a fleet of vehicles with an arsenal of tools, geared up to deal with anything hurricanes Harvey and Irma threw its way.

The team was operating as part of the nation's highly trained search-and-rescue force, deployed to provide assistance after natural disasters.

It spent more time traveling and awaiting orders and assignments than it did actively effecting rescues in the storm-ravaged disaster zones.

All told, the Phoenix team assisted in directly rescuing 17 people, according to department records — a fraction of the thousands of people rescued or assisted by hurricane-response efforts. It was reimbursed for \$3 million by the U.S. government.

It wasn't alone in being underused.

Thousands of the country's most highly skilled rescuers who deployed to hurricane-hit regions of Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico spent more time traveling and awaiting orders than they did rescuing residents, racking up an anticipated \$92 million in reimbursement claims from the cash-strapped Federal Emergency Manage-

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Family: Police assaulted Mesa grandmother

Jason Pohl Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Mesa Police Department is under fire and conducting an internal review after a Facebook post went viral alleging officers roughed up — and cited — an 84-year-old stroke survivor and grandmother.

Shared more than 12,000 times by noon Saturday, the Thursday night post shows a frail woman in a hospital gown with a black eye and bruises and cuts from her forearms to her wrists. In the video from her hospital bed, the woman, whose family said she has suffered four strokes and has chronic medical ailments, struggles to make sense of the ordeal in her neighborhood on Valentine's Day. Officers were responding to a call of a man with a

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VALLEY & STATE 18A



A massive earthquake that shook buildings in southern Mexico on Friday and an ensuing helicopter crash had some Valley residents fearing for the safety of family and friends. GETTY IMAGES

USA TODAY

States aim to guard vote

After warnings that Russian hackers would target 2018 congressional elections and with little help coming from Washington, states are taking measures on their own to ensure ballot safety. Mississippi encrypted its system and even paid a company — which failed — to hack into the new system. 1B

Access to federal lands

Republicans in Congress are considering granting Border Patrol nearly unlimited access to federal land along the U.S.-Mexico border by waiving nearly 36 federal laws and regulations. 5A



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